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SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON'S "PARABLE OF THE WISE  
AND FOOLISH VIRGINS." (*FRONTISPIECE.*)

THIS impressive "illumination of the parable" is a mural painting forming an altar piece in the church at Lyndhurst, England, a town in the famous New Forest region. Its execution was a labor of love with the artist, Sir Frederick Leighton, who, visiting friends in the neighborhood at the completion of the edifice, volunteered the gift of the picture. The composition is panoramic, and the figures life-size.

It is the palace of the King, and the effulgence of his glory is the light thereof, streaming forth into the midnight upon the daughters of wisdom awaiting his royal greeting. Attended by a company of youthful musicians, rose-crowned and filling the air with joyous melody from the instruments they carry, Christ as the bridegroom, of noble form and glorious in a robe of heaven's own whiteness, appears under the central arch and turns in transcendent benediction to those on his right. The approval of that countenance is their supreme gladness, and every eye seeks it. Across the brightness of its welcome there falls, however, a shadow of sadness reflecting his consciousness of the sorrow and grief of the five to the left. This dark side of the picture tells its own sad story of the bitter reaping that follows neglect. A sentinel angel, with restraining gesture and outstretched wings, guards the way to Him for whose coming they are unprepared. A rent wall, an owl symbolizing Sloth, and the broken branch of a vine, are suggestively shown.

In one hand Christ holds the lilies of spotlessness; the other is extended to one kneeling at his feet who has pressed forward eagerly, holding before him the smallest of the lamps with its single flame. The largest of the lamps, bravely alight in triple flame, is held aloft by a superb figure, typical of ideal Christian service, whose position and lamp in the group suggest the thought that the first shall be last and the last first. By the side of the youngest of this company stands an angel, gently encouraging her as with rapt expression upon her earnest face, bearing the marks of illness, she timidly shows the token of her faithfulness.

A playing fountain around which some doves are fluttering, significant both of happy activity, and an orange grove against the deep blue of a star-sown sky, complete that side of the picture upon which falls the radiancy and peace of heaven.

JOHN POWELL LENOX.



*Sir Frederick Leighton*

THE PARABLE OF "THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS"

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